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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 4524
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 2121
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 6205
RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON 2345
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 002044

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SUBJECT: JAPAN PRESSES BURMA BUT EXTENDS ADDITIONAL AID

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires James Zumwalt for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: Japanese Foreign Minister Koumura pressed Burmese Foreign Minister Nyan Win for progress on democratization and human rights when the two met July 22 in Singapore. He also advised Burma to cooperate fully with and not discriminate against humanitarian assistance workers engaged in post-cyclone reconstruction efforts. Finally, he pressed for a complete investigation into the shooting death last September of a Japanese journalist. Koumura also announced Japan will grant an additional USD 21 million for cyclone relief. Win replied that it has always been Burma's policy to cooperate with the United Nations and it will continue to do so. Talks with Aung San Suu Kyi will resume when "the timing is right", Win said, and Burma is on the path to democracy as demonstrated by the recent constitutional referendum, its seven-step roadmap, and the fact that it is in the process of promulgating election and political party laws that will guarantee a "free and multi-party" general election in 2010. END SUMMARY.

JAPAN PRESSES BURMA...

12. (C) Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Koumura pressed his Burmese counterpart, Foreign Minister Nyan Win, for progress on democracy and human rights when the two met July 22 in Singapore on the sidelines of the ASEAN plus three meeting. According MOFA Southeast Asia Deputy Director and Chief of the Myanmar Unit Hideyuki Yazama, Koumura told Win that Burma must involve all stakeholders in the political process, release all political prisoners including Aung San Sui Kyi, and grant open access to foreign aid personnel working to provide post-cyclone reconstruction assistance. In addition, Koumura pressed again for a thorough investigation into the September shooting death of a Japanese journalist and repeated Japan's demand that his video camera and other belongings be returned.

13. (C) FM Win replied that it is Burma's policy to cooperate with the United Nations and that it will continue to do so, reported Yazama, who served as the interpreter during the meeting. Win pointed out that UN Special Advisor Ibrahim Gambari had been invited to visit in May but had to postpone his visit due to the cyclone. He is now scheduled to come in mid-August, as is recently-appointed UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights Thomas Ojea Quintana. With regard to cyclone recovery efforts, Win told Koumura that Burma is cooperating with the United Nations and this, too, will continue.

14. (C) Concerning democratization and human rights, Win told Koumura that the last government talks with Aung San Sui Kyi had taken place in January and that since then, "the timing had not been right" for further talks, given the preparations for the referendum and the cyclone. "If the timing becomes good, the government will resume the meetings", Win told Koumura. He then explained that Burma is following a seven-step road map to democratization. The constitutional referendum has just been held and general elections are scheduled for 2010. In the meantime, said Win, the government will be promulgating laws on elections and political parties. The laws which will be passed will guarantee freedom of assembly and union, and if the parties follow the laws they will assure the 2010 elections will be "free and multi-party."

15. (C) Win complained to Koumura that certain western powers are pushing Burma by criticizing them and passing sanctions, but the goal of both these western powers and the government in Burma is the same: democracy. Instead of sanctioning us, said Win, these countries should be providing assistance to help achieve the shared goal of democracy. Koumura, reported Yazama, replied that although the goal is important, so too is the means and process by which it is reached. This process is important to both Japan and much of the rest of the international community.

16. (C) With regard to the investigation into the death of the Japanese journalist, Win replied that this falls within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Home Affairs, which is in charge of any investigation. That said, he claimed that the

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been cooperating with Japan to the best of its ability on this issue and will continue to do so.

... AND GRANTS ADDITIONAL AID

17. (C) In addition to pressing Burma for progress on the fronts described above, Koumura also announced Japan will extend an additional USD 21 million in post-cyclone reconstruction assistance, to be used primarily to rebuild agricultural and educational facilities. This will bring Japan's total cyclone assistance package to approximately USD 33 million. According to Yazama, Koumura strongly delivered the message that there should be no discrimination against foreign assistance workers.

COMMENT

18. (C) The carrot and stick approach to Burma is still Japan's preferred method of operation. Despite notable lack of success over the last several years, Tokyo continues to believe it can exert more influence over Rangoon if there is an aid relationship in existence. Japan chafes at suggestions that they reduce the scope of their cooperation with Burma, arguing that to do so will result in a loss of influence that will simply be replaced by China and others who are only too happy to fill the vacuum without any strings attached.
ZUMWALT